



# Department Updates

February 2021

## Child Support Agency

**Lynette Metcalf**  
**Program Manager**

The Child Support Window remains closed to the public. Our staff is rotating time in the office and working remotely. Child Support clients can call (715) 537-6390 and leave a message to set up an appointment and/or request a call back or email our agency at [childsupport@co.barron.wi.us](mailto:childsupport@co.barron.wi.us).

COVID-19 has certainly created challenges for many of our clients through loss of employment and/or reduction of work hours. The Child Support Agency has been working diligently to modify child support orders when appropriate due to employment changes and work with our clients for compliance of their court order. Despite COVID-19, the Child Support Agency was able to collect a total of \$1,220,239.28 in child

support from November 1, 2020 through January 31, 2021 to support our client's families.

Due to COVID-19, the Child Support Agency/Workforce Resource job fair has been unable to continue, however as spring nears, we anticipate resuming drive thru job fairs until we are able to start holding in person job fairs once again.

## County Clerk

**DeeAnn Cook**  
**County Clerk**

A February 16, 2021 Primary Election is required to narrow the field of Seven Superintendent of Public Instruction candidates down to two. The top two vote getters will move on to the Spring Election in April where the race will be decided. In our area, voter turnout is expected to be fairly low since that is the only contest on the ballot and most people are unfamiliar with the candidates.

Our Spring Election in April will garner much more local interest. On the ballot will be municipal and school board positions in addition to a municipal referenda in the Town of Almena and school referenda in Barron and Cumberland School Districts. There are several con-

tested races which tends to bring out voters so turnout is expected to be considerably higher than February. Also on the ballot in April is the Court of Appeals District 3 race. The only county level race on the ballot this spring is the Multi-jurisdictional Municipal Judge race for Town of Stanley and Village of Cameron. Whenever a municipal judge serves more than one municipality, it becomes a county level race. The main difference is that candidates file candidacy with the county rather than the municipality. County Board members are not up for election this year. They are up for election every other year on even years.

Our foot traffic continues to be fairly low and marriage licenses are down somewhat but we expect that may turn around very

soon. We will continue to have couples schedule an appointment to come in for a marriage license in order to keep a minimal amount of people here at any time since it is working very well. We have taken turns working remotely and have managed to keep our office covered safely.

On a side note, the temperature on my way to work this morning was -35 and we won't make it above 0 today. Schools in the area are closed due to the extreme temperatures. I'd say that is officially a "cold snap", February 15, 2021. On the bright side though, tomorrow the high will be in the teens and the expected high one week from today is 34 with a low of 26. Now that's more like it!

## Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC)

### Jennifer Jako Director

The ADRC is a one-stop shop or clearinghouse for unbiased information to resources for older adults, adults with disabilities, caregivers, and other community providers. We serve anyone regardless of income or assets and our services are free and confidential. You don't necessarily need to have an issue to talk with us, you may just be curious or have a question - our job is to help you understand all the various resources and plan or navigate decisions to stay healthy as you age and for those living with a disability. Every three years we are required to create an Aging Plan, so we will be asking for community input over the next 6 months to be able to develop a plan that meets the top needs of our aging population.

With guidance from Public Health, the ADRC continues to provide services in safer ways during this pandemic - with a majority of our work being done over the phone and virtually. ADRC doors remain closed to walk-ins and face to face appointments, but we will still provide to customers who have the need. Here is a snapshot of our current services:

- Information & Assistance (I&A) Specialists know about all the various resources and options and can help weigh pros and cons to various decisions. They help you navigate care options for anything from staying in your own home to assisted living or nursing home care. I&A staff determine functional and financial eligibility for Wisconsin's publicly funded long term care program.
- Benefit Specialists assist those over age 60 and those under age 60. They are the red tape cutters to help you understand and apply for public and private benefits, Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and help you understand legal rights. Many government programs can be difficult to understand, and many customers appreciate this 1:1 support.
- Dementia Care Specialists provide expert consultation for caregivers and resources for people with dementia and work with communities to become dementia-friendly, including training businesses and organizations by offering education.
- Caregiver Specialists serve older adults and their caregivers by providing information about resources and programs, including information about our adult day respite service Daybreak (currently suspended) and current virtual support groups.
- Healthy Aging workshops are currently being offered virtually. We have new tablets that customers may lend from us to join workshops. Please contact Alisa Lammers at Ex 6374 if you are interested in registering for our upcoming workshops:
  - Healthy Living with Diabetes – March 2-April 13, 9:30am-noon
  - Living Well and Chronic Conditions – April 5-May 10, 1:30-4pm
- Meals on Wheels continues to operate fully and is one of the biggest service requests during the pandemic. We are currently servicing ~300 people daily.
- Grab N Go Lunch is available at 4 different locations in the County: Rice Lake, Barron, Turtle Lake, and Chetek. This program allows seniors to drive to and pick up a nutritious meal and helps keep strain off of the Meals on Wheels service.
- AddLIFE Transportation continues as usual with a focus on providing transportation to those in need for medical appointments, nutrition-related, employment and social needs.
- Medical Equipment Loan Closet is fully operating.
- Commodity Food program distribution continues with drive thru pick up, now available monthly at two locations in the County: Government Center in Barron and the Rice Lake Senior Center.
- Volunteer opportunities are available with our Meals on Wheels program and our health aging workshops. If you are interested in any of our volunteer opportunities, please contact me at Ex 6209.

**ADRC Funding Advocacy:** As mentioned above, ADRCs are the first place citizens go to get accurate unbiased information on all aspects of life related to aging or living with a disability. ADRCs serve the fastest growing demographic of our state's population; yet, the funding methodology has not been revised in more than

## Aging & Disability Resource Center (Continued)

a decade and the allocation has not increased since 2006. To address this problem the Office for Resource Center Development within the Department of Health Services established a stakeholder advisory group to identify the funding needed to cover the services required in our Scope of Services, add critical services to an ADRC's requirements and equalize services among ADRCs statewide. In order to implement the recommendations made by the stakeholder advisory group, an additional investment of \$52.46 million state GPR funding is needed. [Barron County passed and sent our signed Resolution Supporting Increased Funding for Aging and Disability Resource Centers](#) to the Governor and many others for consideration. We were happy to learn that Governor Evers budget proposal directs more funding to ADRCs, dementia care specialists and Elder benefits specialists and I plan to further educate the community on the importance of ADRC work for our communities and advocate at budget hearings to assure this funding remains in the final budget.

**ADRC/Veterans offices continue to update for safety and confidentiality:** After an assessment and recommendations from Captain Baures, we are currently having work done to our main reception area. We are installing swipe doors and upgrading the reception area with a new customer counter with glass. This will keep staff areas safer and confidential. Thank you to IT and maintenance for supporting us during this project.

**Sustainable Kitchens Project:** Our Nutrition Program was recently awarded by GWAAR to work with Sustainable Kitchens. This project will help us evaluate nearly 100 points of our operation – including staffing patterns, menu use, ordering systems, food safety, waste monitoring, etc. This project is perfect timing for us as the community need for meals has been expanding rapidly during the pandemic. This project will help us to assure efficiency and quality services within our Nutrition Program. We use a combination of Federal, State, local and participant donations as funding sources for the program.

**Pandemic Community Response Team:** In addition to the ADRC providing safer services and information about the pandemic, the ADRC is also involved in a greater community effort by helping on a local Community Response Team. This team also includes Public Health, Income Maintenance, Sheriff, UW Extension, Free Clinic, school systems, health systems, food pantries, Benjamin's House and Workforce Resource. This group collaboration has been meeting nearly monthly since the beginning of the pandemic to assure we are keeping on top of emerging community needs during the pandemic. A United Way - Barron County COVID-19 community fund was created and in collaboration with Salvation Army, more than 95 Barron County families were assisted with \$95,796.4 of funding for COVID related-needs such as rent/mortgage assistance, food vouchers, gas vouchers, car repairs, utility bills, phone cards and transportation. This effort is ongoing and the ADRC will continue to assist and serve on this community response team.

We again encourage everyone to continue to call and check in on your family, friends and neighbors frequently. Social isolation continues to be of concern for our very rural isolated homebound neighbors, especially during the considerable length of this pandemic. If you or anyone you know needs any information about our services or needs help planning for the future, please call at 715-537-6225, email staff, or check out our website at [www.adrcconnections.org](http://www.adrcconnections.org), or like us on Facebook [@ADRCBarron](#).